

Week Ending Friday, September 30, 2005

**Remarks During a Briefing on
Hurricane Rita in Colorado Springs,
Colorado**
September 24, 2005

Admiral, thank you very much for a series of briefings that really do comfort me in knowing that our Federal Government is well-organized and well-prepared to deal with Rita. I've come here to watch NORTHCOM in action, to see first hand the capacity of our military to plan, organize, and move equipment to help the people in the affected areas, in this case, of Louisiana and Texas.

We've had full briefings on the storm, it's activities. The first order of business now is to surge search-and-rescue teams, to pull people out of harm's way. Just had an assessment by General Honore, of Lake Charles, Louisiana. It got hit hard. We've got teams on the ground, beginning to analyze the situation and prepare the necessary response to stabilize the situation and, more importantly, save lives there as well.

It's very important for the citizens who have headed into east Texas to understand that even though the storm has passed the coastline, the situation is still dangerous because of potential flooding. A lot of people have left the coastline and headed into east Texas and parts of western Louisiana. It is important for them to listen carefully to the local authorities about whether or not it is safe to return back to their home. It's going to take a while for the authorities on the ground to fully understand the impact of the flooding. And therefore, people who are safe now ought to remain in safe conditions.

At any rate, Admiral, thank you very much for your hospitality. I appreciate your leadership. I want to thank all the folks who work here in NORTHCOM for doing their duty, which is to organize and rally the assets of the of the Federal Government, to help our fellow citizens who are in need.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 a.m. at Peterson Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Timothy J. Keating, USN, commander, U.S. Northern Command; and Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States Army.

The President's Radio Address
September 24, 2005

Good morning. This weekend I will visit U.S. Northern Command in Colorado where we're monitoring Hurricane Rita. As the hurricane continues along its destructive path, the American people can know, courageous and dedicated men and women are responding to our citizens in need. We are marshaling resources of the Federal Government to save lives and property, and bring comfort to those who have evacuated because of this storm.

Over the past week, Federal, State, and local governments have been closely coordinating their efforts for Hurricane Rita. The Department of Homeland Security and FEMA prepositioned food, water, ice, and emergency response team, and helped with the evacuations in Texas and Louisiana. Military assets were also prepositioned so they could be deployed immediately after the storm passes.

At this moment, the following Navy ships are in the region: the *Iwo Jima*, the *Shreveport*, the *Tortuga*, the *Grapple*, the *Patuxent*, and the *Comfort*. The Texas National Guard has activated its Guardsmen, nearly 3,500 so far, with more on call if they are needed. Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, and helicopters are in place, ready to rescue, evacuate, and relocate civilians trapped by the storm. And additional Coast Guard air crews and aircraft are now arriving from around the country.